

understand is that when our people first got to Louisiana, there was nothing — absolute devastation,” said Lucy. “We now have three vehicle-mounted MMCs and 10 CSS SATCOM systems on-site. In less than 2 weeks, we helped to get a viable logistics communications backbone up and running in a disaster zone.”

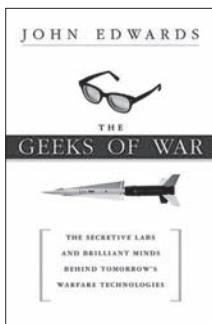
PM DCATS and PM DWTS, located at Fort Monmouth, report to the Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS), located at Fort Belvoir, VA.

Sandy Santiago is an information specialist with Symbolic Systems Inc., providing support to the PEO Command, Control and Communications Tactical Chief Information Office; the Communications-Electronics Life Cycle Management Command Chief Technology Office; and the Team Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Knowledge Center.

Worth Reading

The Geeks of War: The Secretive Labs and Brilliant Minds Behind Tomorrow's Warfare Technologies

John Edwards
AMACOM, 2005, New York



Reviewed by Joe Sites, Executive Vice President of BRTRC Inc., Fairfax, VA.

A military Internet group member recently forwarded a *Boston Globe* review of *The Geeks of War*. Immediately, a number of complaints regarding bias, politics and myriad other things were posted. I had intended to read this book, and these complaints only ensured that I would. I did, and I highly recommend it to members of the acquisition, logistics and technology (AL&T) community.

To use a familiar expression, the book's coverage is a mile wide and an inch deep. If you are a specialist in one area — for example, smart weapons — you will find that the material hits only the high spots of that area and that the particular section

may not be informative to you. There are, however, so many areas covered it is almost certain that this book will provide useful information in other areas that could be applied to your field of expertise. In keeping with the current emphasis on systems integration, this book provides scientists and engineers a good overview on technologies that can greatly influence the development of military systems.

The introduction to *The Geeks of War* is titled “The Military-Technology Matrix” and it provides an excellent summary of government's and industry's roles and activities in the development of military technologies. This discussion not only lists organizations, it also provides a list of national critical technologies. In telling who and what are involved in military technologies, the author prepares the reader for a better understanding of what is happening in ongoing activities.

Edwards has divided these activities into seven broad areas, each of which is covered in a separate chapter. The spectrum of the material covered in this book can best be understood by listing the subjects in each of its seven chapters: tactical systems; information systems; telecommunications, health, medicine and biotechnology; vehicles and logistics; security and cryptography; and uniforms, protective gear and other equipment.

Of particular interest to me was the discussion of blogs by groups working on a special project. We have recently seen contributions to blogs by some of our junior officers in sharing their experiences in combat. While these have undoubtedly expanded the capabilities of the participants, it has been recognized that without proper security, these blogs could aid a potential enemy. It does not take too much of a stretch of the imagination to consider the possibility of blogs permitting members of different technical organizations with different specialties to make contributions in areas where input would be helpful from a variety of sources.

Now, I have a couple less complimentary comments. I do not like the title *The Geeks of War*. In the current vocabulary, the word “geeks” may be acceptable, but because of my age and many years working with Army research and development scientists and engineers, I find it difficult to use the word geeks in describing them. They are a dedicated group of highly skilled professionals.

My second comment involves the number of projects and the changing environment. It is extremely difficult to keep all the material current. This became evident with one item in the health, medicine and biotechnology chapter. I had

barely finished reading about one product, which was described as very effective, when I was asked if I could help respond to a request from Iraq for a new product to replace the one about which I had just read. Apparently, the product described by the author had not demonstrated the capability described in the book's glowing report.

These comments are not meant to discourage reading *The Geeks of War*, but are meant to make the obvious points that different people use words differently and that success in the lab does not always mean success in the field.

I believe that the scientists and engineers in our AL&T community will find *The Geeks of War* a useful and informative book — even if I don't like the title.

ALTESS News

ALTESS Creates Process Center of Excellence

Pauline Davy and Betty Hearn

The Army's business transformation goals are derived from the Transformation Strategy's key elements. These goals are also *Army Campaign Plan* and *Army Posture Statement* components, as follows:

- Manning the force — Improve manning, readiness and well-being.
- Paying the force — Improve business practices and financial accountability.
- Equipping the force — Improve processes and systems to deliver warfighting capabilities.
- Sustaining the force — Enhance Joint and focused logistics.
- Stabilizing the force — Improve stability operations and procedures.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology's (AL&T's) strategic goal for equipping the force is to develop and institutionalize a process that provides a single integrated life-cycle management view. Implementing an AL&T common business

process portal and environment will better facilitate decisions. Core to a common business process portal and environment is collaboration, which primarily involves data exchange between different information systems and functions that center around people.

Transformation — changing the way the Army does business — is a continuous effort that depends on people, processes and technology. As Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld explains it, "Transformation is not an event — it is a process."

The Product Manager Army Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Enterprise Systems and Services (PM ALTESS) is taking a leadership position in helping the acquisition community focus on improving process excellence. A process is a coordinated, repeatable series of activities performed by people and technology that create an end product of value. Process examples include requirements definition, product development and system testing.

Understanding and working effectively with processes can be difficult and elusive. The challenge is to represent complex activities, interactions and decisions in a visually appealing and flexible way so that a team of analysts working together can find the best solution. To accomplish this, ALTESS has established a Center of Process Excellence to provide organizations the following:

- A flexible process-modeling tool
- A process improvement methodology
- A set of supporting services

The software tool, ProActivity®, is housed in Radford, VA. All process data is stored in a central Oracle® database that is maintained by ALTESS. Users can be located anywhere and gain access from the ALTESS home page via Citrix®. Process analysts can build a process by simply dragging and dropping activities. Users can then view the processes in various ways that are dynamically and automatically generated, as shown in the figure. Analysts can also create reports that analyze the processes in terms of cost, time and resources.

Step 1 of the process improvement methodology is to define the "As-Is" process — describing the process as it is done today. Step 2 is to perform a diagnostic analysis of the As-Is process to pinpoint its issues and weaknesses. Step 3 is to design a "To-Be" process that corrects these problems. Analysts can run reports that compare the To-Be with the As-Is in terms of resources, automation, cost and process duration.